

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 OMB-01 SAM-01 EB-07 MC-02 TRSE-00 AID-05

IGA-02 /080 W

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R 161417Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2040

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 1868

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS TS

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN DECIDES AGAINST PURCHASE OF CHAPARRAL

1. AHMED BENNOUR, MODA SECRETARY OF STATE, INFORMED AMBASSADOR MARCH 15 THAT GOT HAD DECIDED NOT RPT NOT TO AVAIL ITSELF OF USG OFFER TO SELL CHAPARRAL SAM SYSTEM. REASON FOR THIS, CONTINUED BENNOUR, IS THAT EXPERTS HAVE ADVISED THAT SYSTEM DOES NOT RPT NOT PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE AIR DEFENSE. BENNOUR STATED THAT GOT CONTINUES TO BE INTERESTED IN HAWK MISSILES AND WONDERED WHETHER USG POSITION HAD CHANGED.

2. I STATED THAT COST OF HAWK MISSILE SYSTEM IS CERTAINLY NO LESS THAN BEFORE, AND HAD PROBABLY EVEN GONE UP IN RECENT MONTHS. I UNDERSTOOD THAT LATTER WAS CASE WITH HAWKS BEING SOLD TO JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA. I ASKED BENNOUR HOW, IN VIEW OF CHAPARRAL DECISION, GOT ENVISAGED SPENDING FY 76 \$15 MILLION CREDIT.

3. BENNOUR SAID THAT GOT HAD HOPED THAT CREDIT AMOUNTS COULD BE INCREASED SUFFICIENTLY TO ENABLE GOT TO PURCHASE HAWK MISSILE SYSTEM OVER FIVE YEARS, OR, IF NECESSARY, OVER 10-YEAR PERIOD. I REPLIED THAT,
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ASIDE FROM QUANTUM INCREASE IN ANNUAL CREDITS THAT

THIS WOULD NECESSITATE, NO ONE COULD BE CERTAIN
THAT CONGRESS WOULD CONTINUE TO VOTE FMS FUNDS
OVER COMING FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, LET ALONE OVER PERIOD
OF 10 YEARS. OF COURSE, I ADDED, THAT IF GOT IS
DETERMINED TO PROCEED WITH PURCHASE OF WHAT SEEMED
LIKE AN EXTREMELY HIGH-COST WEAPONS CONSIDERING
LIMITED TUNISIAN RESOURCES, WE COULD ALWAYS EXAMINE
THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER INCREASING FMS CREDITS.
I CAUTIONED THAT ANY INCREASE, HOWEVER, WOULD BE
DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN, AND ESPECIALLY AN AMOUNT
SUFFICIENT TO PERMIT FUNDING OF WHOLE HAWK PACKAGE.

4. BENNOUR SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS MATTER FURTHER
WITH HIS MINISTER.
SEELYE

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